

श्री राममुनी रेड्डी सिरीगीरेड्डी: ऐक्युल रिव्वायरमेंट क्या है?

श्री सभापति: वह तो मंत्री जी ने बता दिया है। श्रीमती जमना देवी बारूपाल।

श्रीमती जमना देवी बारूपाल: सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से रेल मंत्री जी से थोड़ा अनुरोध करूंगी कि हमारे राजस्थान में आप पहले जब रेल मंत्री थे, आपने आश्वासन दिया था कि कोलायत से फलोदी तक रेल लाइन चालू करने का और उसका सर्वे भी हो चुका था लेकिन वहां आज तक रेल लाइन नहीं डाली गई। आप जब वैगनों के लगाने की बात कर रहे हैं तो मैं बताना चाहती हूं कि हमारे वहां हजारों वैगनों की श्री कोलायत में जरूरत है और वहां हजारों मजदूर बेकार बैठे हैं। अगर आप वह रेल लाइन चालू कर दें, जिसका सर्वे हो चुका है, तो हजारों गरीब मजदूरों को रोजी-रोटी मिल सकती है तथा सरकार को राजस्व मिल सकता है। लेकिन बार-बार लिखने के बाद भी राजस्थान के कोलायत क्षेत्र को अनदेखा किया जा रहा है और हमारी तरफ ध्यान नहीं दिया जा रहा है। मैं आपको याद दिलाना चाहूंगी कि आप जब रेल मंत्री थे...तब रेल चालू करने हेतु कहा था।

श्री सभापति: यह प्रश्न इस प्रश्न में नहीं आता।

श्रीमती जमना देवी बारूपाल: उस दिन से यह मुद्दा है। इसलिए मेरी आपसे प्रार्थना है कि हमारे यहां भी आप श्री कोलायत से फलोदी तक रेल चालू करें और अधिक से अधिक वैगन दें।

श्री नीतीश कुमार: वैगन्स की खरीद से रेल लाइन का कोई सीधा संबंध नहीं है लेकिन हम इस बारे में उनसे चर्चा करेंगे।

श्रीमती जमना देवी बारूपाल: इससे राजस्थान को करोड़ों का राजस्व मिल सकता है और मजदूरों को मजदूरी मिल सकती है।

*503. [The questioner (Shri A. Vijaya Raghavan was absent, for answer vide page 26 intra.]

Crocodile breeding programme in Orissa

*504. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the current status of the Crocodile breeding programmes in Orissa, with details thereof; and

(b) what specific steps Government of India have taken to revive the closed programmes?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SURESH PRABHU)
(a) and (b) Crocodile breeding programme is being carried out in Orissa at Tikarpada, Dangmal and Ramatirtha for gharial, estuarine crocodile and the magar respectively. Besides, breeding of crocodalian species is also done at Nandankanan Zoo. The Central

Government has requested the State Governments only to raise such number of crocodiles at their breeding centers which can be successfully rehabilitated in the wild. The three sanctuaries identified for the purpose in Orissa are Satkosia, Bhitarkanik and Hadgarh respectively. Magars have also been rehabilitated in the river system of Simlipal Tiger Reserve.

SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, crocodile is one of the most important wildlife species. I want to know from the hon. Minister as to how many species of crocodiles and *magars* are seen in the country and whether the Government has got any correct statistics of crocodiles and *magars* in various parts of the country, especially, at Tikarpada, Dangmal, Ramatirtha in Orissa, and also in the Nandankanan Park and the Similpal Tiger Reserve. I would also like to know whether the Government has requested the State Government to raise its number and whether it has sanctioned any new project and given financial assistance for crocodile breeding in Orissa. And, has the number of crocodiles been actually increased? I would also like to know whether the Government of India has given sanction to any new project. If so, what is the total fund that has been given for breeding of crocodiles and also for the protection of crocodile sanctuaries?

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many questions in one supplementary?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, it is not possible to do any physical census of the crocodile population in India, and no attempt has ever been made to even carry out such a census because, as you know, crocodile is a very mobile species which moves from one place to another through various riverways, and it is physically impossible and an inconceivable thing to do a census of its population.

SHRI SURESH KESWANI: It has been done in other countries. In fact, as you are aware, carrying out even a human population census is a very difficult proposition and many countries do not conduct it; but India does it. So, this has been the attempt made by the Government since 1970, when this Crocodile Conservation Programme was launched for the first time with the help of UNDP, and when the crocodile population had reached alarmingly low levels.

[20 April, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

There were only 30 breeding species available at that time. Ever since then, various crocodile rearing programmes have resulted in a great success and on the basis of which we can say that 5000 Ghariyals, 2300 salt water crocodiles and 100 Magars have been released into the wild. The Crocodile Conservation Programme, in fact, is just a breeding programme where the crocodiles are reared in captivity and then released into the wild. This is how the programme has, ultimately, proved to be a success. These figures alone show that the programme has definitely been a success; we had only thirty pairs in 1970 and now so many have been released into the wild. You can have any number of crocodiles reared and there can be any number of conservation programmes and sanctuaries for crocodiles but, ultimately, the limiting factor is the capacity of the rivers to absorb them; if the rivers do not have the capacity to absorb them, they cannot survive. Unless that is assured, there is no point in raising crocodiles in captivity. Otherwise, when they are released, they will die. Therefore, this activity is being carried out under different programmes. Now, the Central Government, in the current year, has got funds, as you have correctly said, for the simple reason that there are not many States that are coming forward to take up this programme. If there is any specific proposal from any State Government which would like to take up such a programme, the Central Government will definitely consider it on the criterion that there should be a possibility of releasing the crocodiles into the wild.

SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: I would like to know whether the Government is aware of the fact that there are allegations of illegal killing and poaching of crocodiles, even inside the sanctuaries and breeding centres, with the connivance of the forest staff, especially at Bhitarkanika, Simlipal and even at Nandankanan. I would also like to know whether the hon. Minister would assure the House that appropriate steps will be taken to protect these species of crocodiles.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, poaching of crocodiles as well as various other species is a serious challenge before the wildlife protection programme in the country. We must make all efforts that are necessary to arrest this and the Government will definitely take

whatever steps that are necessary to do that. Of course, one of the best assurance and insurance against such abuse is the public awareness that is being sought to be created, and I thank the hon. Member for raising such a question.

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: Sir, crocodile breeding is done in the eastern countries, essentially for its skin; and the Chinese eat crocodile meat. But I do not know why we should take up crocodile breeding as such an important programme, unless you are breeding it for the sake of its skin; but, I think, that is a disaster for the crocodile. Therefore, I would like to put a question to the hon. Minister. It is a very important item that we should breed crocodiles at all?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, there appears to be a communication gap. The Government of India's breeding programme is primarily aimed at conservation of these species. This is not for commercial exploitation, either of the skin or any part of the crocodile. In fact, the Government of India discourages its exploitation for any commercial purpose. So, the programme is primarily aimed at conservation, especially because it had reached the level of just 30 breeding pairs in 1970. So, over the period of last 31 years, the programme has proved to be a success. This programme essentially aims at conservation. Right now, as I have said, we would like to definitely encourage this breeding programme, provided there is a possibility that these crocodiles will be released into the wild.

SHRI N.K.P. SALVE: I am sure the Government does not want to shed crocodile tears over the whole matter! Therefore, my question to the hon. Minister is about effective conservation and about ensuring that poaching is minimised. Why don't you allow breeding of crocodiles in the private sector for commercial purposes? What basic objection the Government has, because if that is done, it will ensure that poaching is reduced and your conservation will become more effective? The crocodile skin is one of the most expensive skins, from export point of view. Sir, countries like Thailand, Malaysia and so on are making a lot of money out of that. So, I would like to know whether you would consider formulating a

[20 April, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

policy, both for the purpose of preventing poaching, for better conservation, and for allowing breeding in the private sector.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Crocodile also cleanses the water and it is useful for water purification.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Yes, Sir. Of course, I am thankful to the hon. Member that his concern for wildlife is so apparent that these crocodile tears are not normally seen by everybody; but they are seen only by those who really have concern for the crocodile. I really appreciate your concern, Sir. Sir, the Government of India has no objection if somebody would like to take it up in the private sector, in a regulated manner. But this is a programme of the Government of India, a programme that the Government of India has sponsored. And this is basically a conservation programme.

SHRI BIRABHADRA SINGH: From the hon. Minister's reply it is clear that it is not easy to estimate how many crocodiles are there. But I have a question. There is a white crocodile which is a rare specie or a rare variety in the world. Is there any information as to how many white crocodiles we have in Orissa?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, I do not have the information readily available with me. But I will certainly be happy to provide it to the hon. Member. And this love for the white is well known in the West also.

*505. [The questioner (Shri Prakanta Warisa) was absent. For answer *vide* page 26 *infra*.]

*506. [The questioner (Shri S. Agniraj) was absent. For answer *vide* page 31 *infra*.]

*507. [The questioner (Dr. Swami Sakshi Ji Maharaj) was absent. For answer *vide* page 33 *infra*.]